

**BAZ POEMS**

**KEVIN CADWALLENDER**



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**by KEVIN CADWALLENDER**

*BAZ THE YOUNGER GOES TO WAR*

*BAZ LEX TALIO NIS*

*BAZ WEPT*

*BAZ STIRRING UP THE D.N.A.*

*BAZ AND THE FASCISTS*

*BAZ, CHER CHEZ LA FEMME*

*BAZ AND THE INTENTIONAL FALLACY*

*BAZ AND THE BOURGEOISIE*

*BAZ GOES DUTCH*

*BAZ APPRECIATES ART*

*BAZ VIRGO NIL INTACTUS*

*BAZ INTERFERES WITH THE MEANS OF  
PRODUCTION*

*BAZ TARDY*

*BAZ AND THE MANTLE OF FIDELITY*

*BAZ AND THE RAM RAIDERS*

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**INTRODUCTION**

**BROWN ALE AND THE BIRDY SONG**

Notes on the 'Baz' poems of Kevin Cadwallender.

It's a pleasure to be asked to introduce a collection of Kevin Cadwallender's 'Baz' poems. I published a group of them in a recent number of 'The Echo Room' and was impressed by their vitality and the poet's wry but compassionate humour. As a complete sequence the poems bleed into each other and have a forceful aggregate effect. They are misleadingly simple poems, concealing their true craftsmanship, entertaining work which never cheapens itself intellectually in the process of its creation.

Throughout, the poet distinguishes himself from his creation, Baz, by a display of intelligence and sensitivity that is never patronising. Baz may be a rogue but he engages our sympathy, arouses our compassion and in the poet's case invokes a sense of loss for a childhood world where issues of Class and Ideology had still yet to matter.

As we follow Baz on his riotous adventures Cadwallender subtly explores the contemporary popular culture that has shaped Baz's existence, that has imposed upon Baz his 'victim' status. These poems are firmly rooted in the world of Brown Ale and The Birdy Song, in the world of gratuitous sex and fantasy, the ignorance of Sexism, the world of over-indulgent boozing and pent-up violence. Cadwallender explores the damaging effects of the dominant ideology of Consumer Capitalism in an honest and gritty portrayal of the culture's underbelly. We constantly get the sense that 'Baz' and millions like him have been dispassionately sold short by the system, that Baz is a product of a culture which in spite of surface glitter promises far more salvation than it delivers. Baz is alienated from his own language, is a self-acclaimed Philistine but is still a struggling soul who should never be ignored. Thankfully his rebellious spirit is celebrated in the excellent 'Baz and the bourgeoisie' where he confronts the smug upwardly mobile coach lamp owners with admirable and chaotic fervour.

Cadwallender's language is immediate and strikingly true to life. This sequence should be recognised as a considerable achievement since it heartfully endorses the idea that poetry can explore aspects of popular culture in a thought provoking, humorous and engaging manner.

The Birdy Song and Brown Ale, drunken sexual conquest and Philistine dogma are rooted in our everyday lives. Cadwallender, with sensitivity and perception shows how vital and important it is to address this subject area in these dark times of manifold disdain.

Read on and enjoy.

**BRENDAN CLEARY  
THE ECHO ROOM  
MARCH '93**

## BAZ THE YOUNGER GOES TO WAR

Lining up soldiers  
behind lego buildings  
in Baz's Mam's bathroom.

We would recreate  
unspecified carnage,  
with an aerial bombardment  
of glass alleys.  
Both sides countenancing  
massive losses without  
hope of surrender.

One fateful Sunday  
With a Steel ball bearing  
as big as a tennis ball  
Baz brought the ultimate  
deterrent to bear,  
and with the shattering  
of plastic buildings  
and plastic men  
came the sickening  
crack of bone.

In hospital  
Baz marvelled  
at the resilience  
of flesh,  
accepting my  
surrender  
with gracious  
ease.

## BAZ LEX TALIO NIS

Bullied once too often  
in the Juniors,  
and dreading the  
final bell.

On the long walk home  
not daring to look back,  
Leering voices scuffling  
at my haversack straps.

Yells and commotion  
cry-baby calls  
mocking my misery.  
and cowards yellow  
making my guts ache.

Turning to face  
my own fear,  
and seeing Baz  
dervishing his  
towel bag into  
the enemy ranks.  
I charged and  
we routed them  
all.

Baz grinning  
like a maniac,  
at my mute appreciation  
walked to my house  
saluted and marched  
off.

Stopping only once  
to empty the brick  
from his towelbag.

## BAZ WEPT

An empty rabbit hutch  
and the smell of baking,  
brought home the transience  
of life and the foolishness  
of getting involved.

Still, Baz and me  
buried the pie in  
a next door neighbour's  
garden.

Fingerprints in flour  
and soil beneath our nails  
giving us away to our  
Father's leather belts.

Yet it was worth  
the pain, striking  
a final blow for innocence.

## BAZ STIRRING UP THE D.N.A.

Once in the biology lab  
Confronted by XX and XY  
and a teacher keen  
on sexual equations.

Baz at a loss  
for answers gassed  
the school hamster  
with a blown out  
bunsen burner.

"What kind of moron are you?"  
asked Mr. Chapman.

It was the first time  
I ever saw a teacher bleed.

Mr. Harrison it seems  
used to be an amateur boxer  
before he became a lab technician.

Baz says  
that corporal punishment  
is a waste of time  
and he should know  
his brother was  
once birched  
on a day trip  
to the  
Isle of Man.

## BAZ AND THE FASCISTS

When Baz stopped bed wetting  
and invited us up to the musty  
fantasies of his secret passion,  
It was like 'Joplings' window gone mad.  
Mannequins kitted out with Nazi regalia,  
a primitive arsenal of knives  
and crossbows and rice-flails.  
Like part of his childhood  
got fucked up by the bastard brood  
of Bruce Lee and Eva Braun.

One day pissed in Sunderland High Street,  
Confronted by some National Front skin  
with a copy of 'Bulldog' waving like a flag,  
Baz took off his 'dut'  
and with rhino-like accuracy  
Head-butted him to the ground,

and it was poppy day all over the place

"That's for me Grandad," Baz muttered  
moving off in search of new lethal weapons.

## BAZ, CHER CHEZ LA FEMME

Baz has an idea  
first one this decade,  
let's go to Blackpool  
Do the lights  
Do Yates Wine Lodge  
howk up from the  
top of the tower,  
Buy some booze  
from the off door.

Drinking cheap vodka  
in cheap bed sits  
Baz pisses the bed drunk  
Smuggles out sheets  
after greasy breakfast  
dumps them in a bottle bank.

At the disco  
Baz smooth as diarrhoea  
sidles up to his intended  
a grope itching in his groin,  
"Do yer wanna dance?"  
he says, cool as owt.  
"I already am"  
She smiles.

Years of rehearsed  
sophistication  
are shot to buggery,  
as he opens his gob,

"Go fuck yourself then!"

Baz lurches back to the bar  
orders something poisonous,  
leaves the dancefloor  
to more sensitive souls.

## BAZ AND THE INTENTIONAL FALLACY

Baz bruises easy  
lovebites like gobstoppers  
pearling his neck.  
Grinning like he  
ate a cheshire cat  
and I know we're  
gonna get the whole  
grisly affair with  
sordid colour supplements  
for the next three weeks  
and nobody dares suggest  
what we're all thinking  
as he swaggers back to the bar.

Cos Baz is hard  
I know, he sez so  
and so do his tattoos  
and as he always says  
before he drops you  
on the one hand there's  
L.O.V.E.  
and on the other there is .....

## BAZ AND THE BOURGEOISIE

In her lounge, like she didn't have a living room  
and Baz rattling on about how he never scabbed  
and me feeling guilty for not being a miner  
and the cut glass crystal decanter getting  
more and more offensive  
and the brass pit lamps were  
just as stuck up as her gobshite  
of a husband  
who droned on and on about insurance  
and his shares in British Gas  
and how his 'Procol Harem' L.P.'s  
were so bastard rare that it didn't  
matter if they were crap or not.

And me being polite as usual  
and nodding in all the right places  
and Baz wanking the West Highland White  
under the table with his boot  
and me bolting Mousakka  
and Bulls Blood and tryin' not  
to look down the low cut dress  
of our gracious hostess,  
who says she and her husband  
have an 'Open relationship'  
from the 'Open university'  
and I'm thinking, "I want out"  
and Baz reckons he's scored  
and comes up grinning from under  
the table like some perverse  
synchronised swimmer.

and I can't find the car keys  
and the Husband is showing me  
his 'Airfix' kits and trying  
to put his hand on me bum.  
and Baz I can tell  
is shagging noisily  
like a bollock in a china shop,  
the crystal decanter  
giggling nervously.

and I'm out of there  
Baz trailing, cursing  
falling over his libido

as it pulls its 'kecks' up.

Halfway home  
Baz eyes me suspiciously,  
"You're a real wanker sometimes!"

and reluctantly I have to agree.

## BAZ GOES DUTCH

Double  
Dutch  
in Holland,  
Baz grasps  
the fact  
that his  
vocabulary  
does not extend  
beyond its Northern  
confines.  
Gazes out of  
the window  
at dutch swans  
in dutch canals  
muttering,

"Look at all these  
fuckin' fjords!"

## BAZ APPRECIATES ART

Half-cut and looking for the final cut,  
In a Hamburg 'Cunsthalle'  
with crude jokes and  
Baz looking for the bog  
that Rodin pissed in.  
Insights as profound  
as blurb on beermats  
bubble out:  
"I always liked the Mona Lisa myself,  
I read in 'Viz' once she had a canny arse."

Meanwhile in another world  
Da Vinci paints 'The tart with the fat backside'  
as drunks peruse and yearn  
for that uncanny smile.

## BAZ VIRGO NIL INTACTUS

Ten pints of brown ale  
and she not far behind  
down the back of  
the 'Workies' club  
with the urine on bricks  
and stale cigarettes  
he loses it  
after a couple of sly grunts  
and her tights  
unceremoniously wrinkled  
to the dull thud  
of 'The Birdy Song'  
and if either one  
remembers  
it'll be a miracle  
or because  
she forgot her pill  
like he forgets her name

## BAZ INTERFERES WITH THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION

Having had one too many  
at the Eyesenck Oyster Bar,  
Baz in furtive mood  
Smooches to Marx  
in the flickering  
T.V. Light.  
Wet dreams his way  
through Rosa and several other  
revolutionary role models  
before his appetite is  
sated like Stalinism  
in a curry sauce of anarchy  
Kriptonin and Bakunin  
dance without leading  
into images of young men  
in classrooms of class  
where Durkheim was found  
beaten into  
a state of anomie  
which led to erotic  
dreams and sticky  
hands interfering  
with various  
means of production

And the posters were mute  
Che and Vlad hiding in  
incomprehensible  
iconography.

## BAZ TARDY

Some twelve or  
fourteen moonshines  
lag of a brother.  
Baz can still drink  
most legitimate boozers  
under the table.

and in the plague of  
customs and excise  
Baz would never permit  
the curiosity of nations  
or their representatives  
to deprive him of his  
booty.  
When the dimensions  
of a suitcase are  
as well compacted  
with  
Cigarettes for Mam  
and Rum for Dad,  
as a souvenir  
donkey.

Clinking  
through customs  
brazen as necessity,  
with gods standing  
up and cheering  
for bastards.

## BAZ AND THE MANTLE OF FIDELITY

Baz met Julie  
At a party  
she was licking  
jam from his navel,  
when he knew  
it was love.

And her tongue  
keeps him in place  
to this day.

Happy watching  
his tattoos  
turn to fat,  
gripping her  
hand with his  
little band  
of gold,  
clinking  
on his bitter.

Baz goes by  
his Sunday name  
these days,  
works as a  
labourer.

Julie works  
at the shirt factory,  
gets reject shirts  
for Christmas presents.

Baz loves Julie  
and Julie loves Baz  
it says so  
on the sun visor  
of their Ford Cortina.

## BAZ AND THE RAM RAIDERS

So anyway I'll tell yer  
this is how it is,  
We hot wired this Escort,  
no rubbish mind we only 'Twoc' G.T.'s,  
So anyway we took it to the town,  
Ram raided the job centre  
Not a fucking job on the premises  
came out with half a dozen E.T. schemes  
and some crap tapes of lift music.  
Can't get rid of the E.T. schemes,  
Sold the tapes to me Granny,  
She's over the moon,  
thinks it's James Last.

Got nicked last week  
drivin' with no insurance,  
no taz, no M.O.T..... no car,  
Bastard surrealist coppers.

So anyway she sez  
Yorra sexist pig, yer never take me anywhere,  
Sez she's not gonna see me again unless I change...  
Bought some Reeboks and  
a new pair of Levi's  
Can't say I haven't tried.

Tell yer what to do  
to stop them petrol bombs,  
put the price of petrol up,  
didn't see half the violence,  
durin' the gulf war.

How man you've never seen nowt like it,  
it was bliddy great man  
hundreds, na thousands of us  
rampaging through the city,  
Pouring over the Tyne Bridge,  
It was like a revolution man.  
I, a do the Great North run  
every year.  
Why it keeps us off the streets.

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THE ECHO ROOM**

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